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See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
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1. Nam	1 <b>e</b>				
historic LANCA	ASTER COURT HO	OUSE HIST	ORIC DISTRICT	(VHLC 51-8	1)
and/or common	N/A	_			
2. Loca	ation				
street & number	Route 3	3			N/A not for publication
city, town Lanca	aster		n/a_ vicinity of	congranal and district	<u> </u>
state Virgin	nia	code	51 county	Lancaster	code 103
3. Clas	sificatio	n			
Category  district building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private X both Public Acquisi in process being consi	tion	Status X occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agricultureX commercial educational entertainment _X government industrial military	museum  park  X private residence  X religious  scientific transportation other:
<b>4. O</b> wn	er of Pro	opert	У		
name Multip	ole Ownership	(See C	ontinuation Shee	t <b>#1)</b>	
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5. Loca	ation of	Legal	Descripti	on	
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc.	Lancas	ter County Courtl	nouse	
street & number	N/A				
city, town Lar	ncaster	,		state	Virginia 22503
6. Rep	resentat	ion ir	Existing	Surveys (See	Continuation Sheet #2
	American Bui Inventory	dings	has this pro	pperty been determined	eligible?yes _X_ no
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#### 7. Description Condition Check one Check one \_ excellent deteriorated \_\_ unaltered X original site X altered N/A X good ruins \_ moved date \_\_ fair \_\_ unexposed Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Lancaster Court House is a linear town stretching for about three-quarters of a mile along Route 3 near the geographic center of this Northern Neck county. The historic district comprises a county seat settlement consisting of twenty-two major structures, including a courthouse complex, two former taverns, a church, and a small number of private residences. Particularly impressive are the county buildings which include not only a late antebellum courthouse but also two 18th-century buildings: the former jail and old clerk's office. Lancaster was the first county seat in Virginia to erect a Confederate monument (1872) which still stands on a small green. The residences are primarily woodframe, late 19th- and early 20th-century structures and retain their front yards and rear fields preserving for the town its intimate scale and rural setting.

#### ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The center of the historic district is marked by the former clerk's office, erected in 1745 with an addition dating to 1833. The original section of the 1½-story building was constructed on a two-step water table in Flemish bond. The brickwork is distinguished by glazed headers as well as a raking course of glazing on the east wall. The building has a box cornice and replacement window frames with 6/6 hung sash. In 1833 the building was extended to the west, the addition also in Flemish bond but without glazing. Rowlock lintels similar to those found on the earlier section are used in the addition. The 1833 section has molded sills and 6/6 hung sash. The building is typical of the form taken by 18th- and 19th-century clerks' offices.

Dominating the village is the courthouse, which was built in 1860-61. The portico dates from a 1937 remodeling at which time the present jail and clerk's office additions were erected. In its present form, the 2-story, 5-course-American-bond structure is similar to a number of Piedmont and Southside courthouses influenced by the temple-form courthouse designs of Thomas Jefferson.

To the east of the courthouse and across the road is the old jail. The original section of Flemish bond was constructed in 1743 with an addition made in three-course American bond in 1820. The structure is sheltered by a continuous gable roof and has irregular fenestration. It now serves as the Mary Ball Washington Museum and Library. Like the clerk's office, the jail is typical of those built in the 18th century, few of which have survived.

Located adjacent to the old clerk's office is the marble Confederate monument erected in 1872 by the Ladies Memorial Association of Lancaster County. The Lancaster monument is in the form of an obelisk with a carved tablet on the north side depicting an angel placing a wreath on a dead soldier. The marble base and fence were added in ca. 1890 when such memorials were popular.

The district contains one church which is located on the eastern edge of the town. The wood-frame, l½-story edifice was built in 1884 in the Carpenter-Gothic style and is distinguished by its arched windows, fanciful belfry, and board-and-batten siding. The church adds to the village's picturesque 19th-century image.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

### 8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture X architecture art commerce communications		ig landscape architectur law literature military music	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates		Builder/Architect	N/A	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Lancaster Court House Historic District on Virginia's Northern Neck preserves the quintessential character of the rural Virginia courthouse village. The focal point of the district is Lancaster County's imposing late antebellum courthouse, which, with its 1937 portico and remodeling, recalls the Roman Revival courthouse designs of Thomas Jefferson. The courthouse complex includes the former jail and old clerk's office, both rare mid-18th-century survivors, and an 1872 Confederate memorial believed to be the first such monument erected in Virginia. A ca. 1800 tavern, mid-19th-century post office, Carpenter-Gothic church, turn-of-the-century store, and numerous detached mid-19th-to-early-20th-century dwellings complete the linear village. Virtually free of modern intrusions, the district maintains a visually appealing harmony of scale, color, texture, and materials, all within a larger agrarian setting. The county archives preserve a remarkably complete set of records dating from the formation of Lancaster County in 1651.

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#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Lancaster County, one of Virginia's oldest counties, was formed from Northumberland County in 1651. It is one of the few Virginia counties established in the 17th century which has complete records kept since the date of its formation. By 1654 plans were underway for the construction of a courthouse, the justices having met in private residences prior to that time. The exact location of the first court buildings is unknown; however, county records reveal that the builder was William Norgham. It is assumed that the courthouse stood somewhere on the Corotoman River since a county order was issued for "ye building of a courthouse in Corotoman..." and the mention of an "inlett for the new Courthouse." By 1698 there was sufficient opposition to the first location of the courthouse to consider "itt convenient to remove ye courthouse of this county to the townland of Captain William Ball." This so-called town, established in 1691 by the Virginia Assembly in their efforts to encourage the development of towns in the colony, was located on the western side of the mouth of the Corotoman River and served as the county seat until 1740. The building specifications for this courthouse are among the most detailed descriptions of a courthouse to appear in Colonial court records and are therefore an invaluable source for information of that period. The specifications called for a brick building which in itself was highly unusual for public buildings in rural areas in the 17th century and measured the importance which local residents attached to their courthouse. In 1738 county records again show dissatisfaction with the location of the courthouse and call for its removal to a field near the headwaters of the Corotoman. The courthouse built at this site stood until construction of the present court building in 1860. Part of the jail and part of the old clerk's office date from the mid-18th century.

9. Major Bi	bliographica	l Refer	ence	<b>S</b> (See C	ontinuation	Sheet #7)
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	. Statistical Gazet	teer of Virg	inia and	North Ca	rolina, 1855	. Richmon
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<ol> <li>i5), I hereby nominate this cording to the criteria an ate Historic Preservation</li> </ol>		he National Regi he National Park	ster and cer Service.			
	ll, Executive Direct ic Landmarks Commiss			date	JAN 1819	983
For NPS use only I hereby certify that t	his property is included in t	he National Regi		date		
Keeper of the National	Register					
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Chief of Registration				54 M 6 6	<u> </u>	10 de 10 12 14

Lancaster, VA 22503

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

LANCASTER COURT HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT, LANCASTER COUNTY, VA Continuation sheet #1 Item number 4

For NPS use only received date entered

Page

Cont	inuation	sheet #1 Item number	4	Page 1
4.		S OF PROPERTY (Arranged by lot numbers indication Map 1 of 3)	ated on t	ax map included with
	81.	Grace W. Pierce Lancaster, VA 22503	91A.	Lancaster County Lancaster, VA 22503
	82.	Lancaster County (Courthouse) Lancaster, VA 22503	99.	Trinity Church Lancaster, VA 22503
	83.	Bertha G. Giese Lancaster Hotel Lancaster, VA 22503	100.	Christ Church Parish, Trustee c/o Trinity Episcopal Church Lancaster, VA 22503
	84.	Philip P. Purrington, Jr. (Old Post Office P. O. Box 185 Lot) Lancaster, VA 22503	101.	Mrs. Orpha F. Lee P. O. Box 35 Lancaster, VA 22503
	85.	Robert B. Gillions Mary M. Gillions Oldhams, VA 22529	102.	Elizabeth G. Hammock P. O. Box 188 Lancaster, VA 22503
	86.	A. T. Enterprises, Ltd. c/o Mrs. Ann Parsons Box 65	103.	Woman's Club of Lancaster Lancaster, VA 22503
	87.	Merry Point, VA 22513  Michael S. and Janet K. Christopher	104.	Lancaster County (Courthouse Green) Lancaster, VA 22503
		P. O. Box 99 Lancaster, VA 22503	105.	Catherine Chilton P. O. Box 142
	88.	J. R. Cornwell Estate Lancaster, VA 22503	1055	Lancaster, VA 22503
	88A.	Anita B. Towle Merry Point, VA 22513	10/8.	Mary Ball Washington Museum and Library P. O. Box 97
	89.	Norma C. Marshall Lancaster, VA 22503	,	Lancaster, VA 22503
	89A. 90.	Richard M. and Rose P. Pruett P. O. Box 85		

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

LANCASTER COURT HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT, LANCASTER COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #2 Item number 6, 7

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Page1, 1

#### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

(2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey 1976, 1982 State Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission 221 Governor Street Richmond, VA 23219

#### 7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

The oldest houses in the town are the ordinary and Lancaster House. The ordinary is a 2½-story, wood-frame, Federal-period residence. The structure has a side-hall plan and a brick exterior end chimney laid in Flemish bond. Stylistic evidence suggests that the ordinary was built ca. 1800. Unlike the neighboring later houses, the building has no front yard but stands directly on the main road. Across Route 3 to the rear of the green is Lancaster House, a five-bay, two-story, frame dwelling built in the late-Federal style. The house has been altered, and its present small pedimented portico may be a later alteration.

A two-story, end-opening frame barn and a small wood-frame shed both dating to the early 20th century constitute the outbuildings associated with the Lancaster House. The town contains a number of detached residences that vary in date from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. The buildings are wood-frame, and those on the north side of Route 3 tend to be closer to the road than those on the south side.

In addition to the residences, the district contains a few commercial buildings. Adjacent to the courthouse is a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -story, wood-frame structure that today serves as a law office. The structure is believed to be an antebellum post office. The James H. Giese Store and residence is located to the east of the present law office. The building dates to ca. 1900 and is the town's most prominent commercial structure.

As land use around the district is primarily agricultural, density is very low. Topographically, the area is flat with houses located on large lots which front or side large fields. Included within the district boundaries is open space farmland sufficient to represent the rural character of Lancaster.

Inventory: Below is an inventory of the twenty-five structures comprising the Lancaster Court House Historic District. There is one noncontributing element in the district. The number at the end of each inventory entry corresponds to the sketch map of the district included with this nomination -- Map 2 of 3. The noncontributing structure is marked by an asterisk and was determined so because it does not conform to the rest of the district in Style or materials.

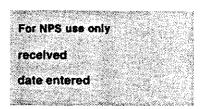
### SOUTH SIDE:

(Trinity Cnurch): wood frame (board-and-batten siding); 1 story; gable roof (standing seam metal); 1 bay (front); 1-story, center-bay porch. Church. Late 19th century. 1884. Map #1.

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

LANCASTER COURT HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT, LANCASTER COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #3 Item number 7



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7. <u>DESCRIPTION</u> -- Inventory (continued)

### ROUTE 3

#### SOUTH SIDE:

Wood frame (aluminum siding); 2 stories; gable roof (standing seam metal); 3 bays; 1-story, 3-bay screened porch. Detached house. 1880s. Map #2.

Wood frame; 2 stories; cross gable roof plus domical roof on north bay (standing seam metal); 3 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with columns supporting sloping roof. Detached house. Queen Anne. 1890s. Map #3 and map #3a (garage).

(Confederate Monument): obelisk with marble base added later. Fenced ca. 1890. 1872. Map #4.

(Clerk's Office): brick (Flemish bond) and water table (stepped); 1½ stories; gable roof (slate); 4 bays. Museum. 1745;1833. Map #5.

Wood frame; 2 stories; gable roof (standing seam metal); 4 bays; 1-story, off-center-bay porch with splayed posts. Detached house. Club meeting house. 20th century. Map #6.

(Lancaster House, Mary Ball Washington Museum): wood frame; 2 stories; gable roof (standing seam metal) with end chimneys; 5 bays; 1-story pedimented portico with dentils and square posts. Detached house (now museum). Late Federal. 1840s. Map #7.

Wood frame (weatherboard); 2 stories; gable roof (standing seam metal). Barn. 20th C. Map #7a.

Shed and ruins behind Lancaster House. 20th century; 19th century. Map #7b;7c.

Brick (Flemish and 3-5-course American bond); 2 stories; gable roof (wood shingle) with end chimneys; 6 bays with connecting hyphen. Jail. Mid-18th & mid-19th centuries. Map #8.

Wood frame (aluminum);  $1\frac{1}{2}$  stories; gable roof (composition); 2 gable dormers; 5 bays; 1-story side porch. Detached house. Cape Cod. 1950s. Map #9.

Wood frame (aluminum); 1½ stories; cross gable roof (composition); 1 gable dormer; 4 bays. Detached house. Cottage. 1940s. Map #10 and map #10a (garage). NORTH SIDE:

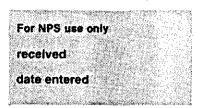
Wood frame (aluminum); 2 stories; cross gable roof (standing seam metal); 3 bays; 1-story, 2-bay porch with bracketed supports, star motif, and splayed posts. Detached house. Romantic Revival. 1880s. Map #11.

(Lancaster County Courthouse): brick (5-course American bond); 2 stories; gable roof (slate); 3 bays; 2-story, 3-bay tetrastyle porch with Tuscan, pedimented portico and half-round window dentils. Government. Classical Revival. 1860/61; remodeled 1937.

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

LANCASTER COURT HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT, LANCASTER COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #4 Item number 7



Page 3

7. DESCRIPTION -- Inventory (continued)

### ROUTE 3

#### NORTH SIDE:

Wood frame (weatherboard);  $1\frac{1}{2}$  stories; gable roof (standing seam metal roof); 3 bays. Commercial. 1840s. Map #13.

Wood frame (weatherboard); 2 stories; slanting flat roof (standing seam metal); 6 bays; 1-story, center-bay screened porch, pedimented. Commercial (store). Ca. 1900. Map #14.

(Job Carter Ordinary): wood frame (shingle); 2½ stories; gable roof (standing seam metal); 3 bays. Detached house. Late Federal. Ca. 1800. Map #15.

\* Brick (stretcher bond); 1 story; gable roof (composition); 3 bays. Commercial (office) 1960s. Map #16. NONCONTRIBUTING ELEMENT

Wood frame (weatherboard);  $1\frac{1}{2}$  stories; gable roof (composition); 5 bays; 1-story, 3-bay screened porch. Bungalow-type. 1920s. Map #17.

Wood frame (weatherboard); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 1 bay. Detached house. Vernacular. 1930s. Map #18.

Wood frame (weatherboard); 1 story; gable roof (standing seam metal); 3 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch. Detached house (realtor's office). Cottage. 1910. Map #19.

Wood frame (weatherboard); 2 stories; gable roof (standing seam metal); 2 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch. Detached house. Romantic Revival. 1860s. Map #20.

Wood frame (weatherboard); 1½ stories; cross gable roof (composition); 3 bays; 1-story, center-bay porch over main entrance. Detached house. Vernacular. 20th century. Map #21.

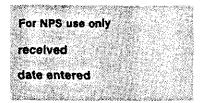
Wood frame (weatherboard); 2½ stories; cross gable roof (standing seam metal); 3 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch. Detached house. Vernacular. 1880s. Map #22.

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

LANCASTER COURT HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT, LANCASTER COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet # 5

Item number 8



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### 8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

As with most courthouse sites, a small town evolved in the vicinity of the county seat. Records from the late 18th century indicate that a thriving ordinary operated by Job Carter stood across the street from the courthouse square. A journal of Col. James Gordon refers to a 'ministerial [sid [minstre]]'play being presented in an ordinary at Lancaster Court House in 1759. A large tavern, called the Upper Tavern, stood approximately where the present courthouse is today. The exact location of the 18th-century courthouse is not known; however, a survey drawn in 1809 indicates that it stood just to the east of the old clerk's office on the south side of Route 3. What is now called Job Carter's Tavern was then a store, shown on the 1809 plat as operated by Mr. Adair. The jail located on the eastern side of the courthouse green has one section dating from the mid-18th century and a second section built ca. 1819 to replace a burned part of the early structure. Also located on the courthouse green is the old clerk's office with its 1833 addition. It served to house the county records from 1845 to 1937 and is now used by the Lancaster County Woman's Club.

By the mid-19th century, the town of Lancaster was known as a "post village" and had several stores. A few dwellings stood in the vicinity of the courthouse, including the Lancaster House, built ca. 1840. Several farm dependency buildings stood on the property of the Lancaster House, and undoubtedly the owner farmed the rolling fields that were adjacent to it. It now serves to house part of the Mary Ball Washington Museum. Also dating from ca. 1840 is the tiny post office building (now a lawyer's office) located just east of the courthouse. The town's beginnings as a postal stop may date to as early as 1791, when one of the residents of Lancaster, tavern operator Job Carter, first paid taxes on a "federal Waggon." By the late 1850s, the county had outgrown its 18th-century courthouse and plans were made for a new building. The county court decided to build the new structure on the north side of the road across from the old courthouse site. building committee was instructed not only to consider the lowest bid, but also to take into account the use of 'quality materials and good workmanship." The courthouse, built by Edward O. Robinson at a cost of \$5400, was completed in April 1861, with the committee reporting that the new courthouse was "a handsome and substantial building." Saved from the 18th-century structure were the flagstones of the floor and an old chair known as the "High Sheriff's Chair."

Lancaster escaped the ravages of the Civil War; however, it was not until the 1880s that any substantial building took place in the area. Lancaster County, along with other Northern Neck counties, published a booklet in 1872 to encourage immigration into the region. The booklet, entitled "The Northern Neck of Virginia as a Home for Immigrants," appealed to people in the Northern states, Canada, and Europe and was apparently promoted by Northern Neck counties that found themselves land rich but labor poor following the Civil War. Among the building activities that took place in Lancaster in the postwar period was the erection of a Confederate Monument on the old courthouse green in 1872. It is purported to be the first such monument erected in Virginia to honor her Confederate dead. Most of the major frame dwellings in the district date from the 1880s and 1890s. One major building erected in this period was Trinity Episcopal Church founded as a mission Sunday School of Christ Church Parish in 1882. The original front portion of the church

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LANCASTER COURT HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT, LANCASTER COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet # 6

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### 3. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

was completed in 1884 at a cost of \$500 which was raised by public subscription. During the later years of the 19th century, the present Cornwall House (earlier mentioned as the Job Carter Tavern) was operated as the Lancaster Hotel and catered to visitors to the county as well as those involved in activities of the county court.

Lancaster survived into the early years of the 20th century as a small village. While the large commercial structure east of the courthouse and the small frame cottage on the same side of the road both date to the turn of the century, Lancaster remained basically a rural town with farm buildings and open fields in evidence on its perimeter.

In 1937, the court buildings underwent large-scale renovations. Two substantial wings were added to the courthouse in order to house the jail and the clerk's office. The early jail building became the well-maintained Mary Ball Washington Library and Museum. The addition of a large portico to the front elevation of the courthouse in 1937 has given the building a far more monumental appearance. Other county offices located in the rear of the courthouse are out of view from the road. Several dwellings were built in the period 1930-1970; however, their modest scale and frame construction maintain the general appearance of the district. The Lancaster Court House Historic District remains in the later years of the 20th century a simple, rural courthouse town with structures dating from the mid-18th to the mid-20th centuries, all harmoniously situated along the county's major thoroughfare.

MIP

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$ Elizabeth C. Peirce, compiler, Courthouses of Lancaster County. (Privately printed, n.d.), p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 2.

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Series, Volume 11, p. 104. (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1903).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Lancaster Appeals Book 38, p. 152.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Lancaster Order Book (1859), p. 252; (1861), p. 403.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Board of Immigration. The Northern Neck of Virginia as a Home for Immigrants. (New York: Schmidt and Curtis, 1872).

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LANCASTER COURT HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT, LANCASTER COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet # 7

Item number 9, 10

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### 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lancaster County Appeals Book 38, (1809); Land Tax Books, 1782-1820; Order Books, 1858-1861; Personal Property Tax Books, 1782-1820.

Peirce, Elizabeth C. Courthouses of Lancaster County. Privately Printed, n.d.

Street, Elwood. 'Old Lancaster County Looks to the Future.' Richmond Times-Dispatch, April 26, 1942.

William and Mary Quarterly. 1st Series. Volume 11. Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1903.

### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA -- Verbal Boundary Description (continued) and Justification

lines of lots #100 and 105; the northern boundary line likewise follows the rear (northern) property lines of lots 81 to 90. These lot lines are delineated on Map Section 15, Mantua District, VA State Department of Taxation, Division of Real Estate Appraisal and Mapping (Map 1 of 3 included with this nomination).

Boundary Justification: The boundaries of the Lancaster Court House Historic District have been drawn to include all the buildings that constitute the historic fabric of the town of Lancaster. Also included is the open space behind the Mary Ball Washington Museum house that was formerly a 19th-century farm. The open areas behind the structures fronting on Virginia Route 3 have been included to enhance the rural setting of the town.

